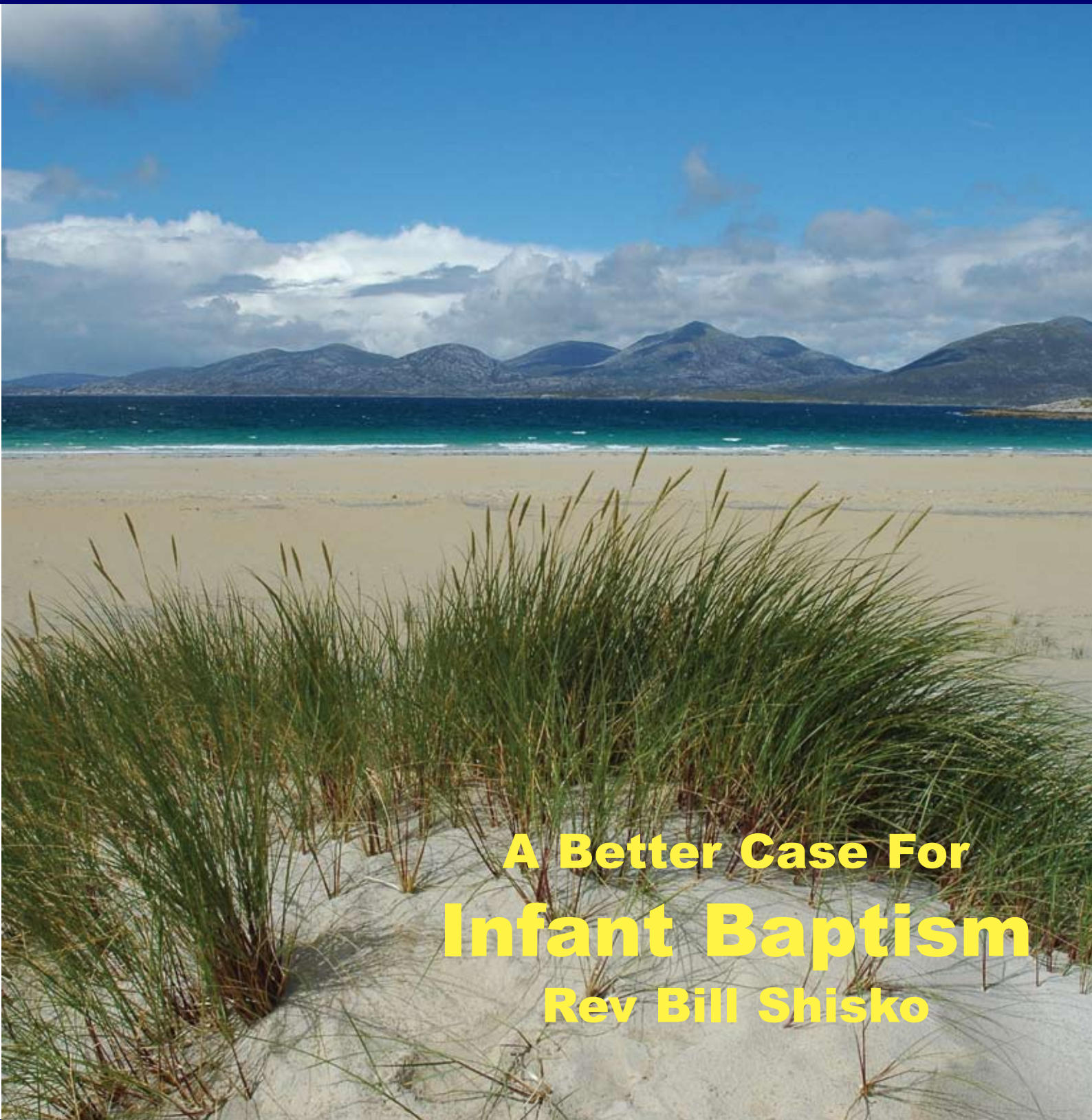


Free Church

# Witness



FEBRUARY 2009 ISSUE



**A Better Case For  
Infant Baptism**  
Rev Bill Shisko



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# Thomas Chalmers

**T**homas Chalmers (1780-1847) is widely regarded as the greatest Scotsman of the nineteenth century. Under God he was the leader who was used to transform the church in Scotland from dead Moderatism to lively Evangelicalism. He was the father of the Free Church. What are the lessons we can learn from his life?

## 1. There is hope for unconverted ministers

Chalmers went to university at the age of 11 and began studying divinity at 15. He was licensed at 19 and became parish minister of Kilmany at 23. Though Chalmers had a godly father he followed the prevailing religious outlook of the day and despised Evangelicals. For several years his church declined as he spent his time and energy teaching Maths and Chemistry at St Andrews. But following the deaths of a sister and uncle and a four month confinement to his room with consumption (TB) he was a humbled man. Wilberforce's *Practical view of Christianity* and Scott's *Force of Truth* were used to bring him to full assurance of salvation. Like Paul of old he became a mighty champion of what he previously despised. Pray for, and witness to unconverted ministers.

## 2. Personal piety is essential

Though possessing great natural gifts, Chalmers' ministry was a failure till his conversion. Attendances at Kilmany church declined. However following his new birth he dedicated himself to studying the Scriptures, reading the Puritans and praying. Family worship was instituted in the home twice daily. He was characterised by the fear of God and not man. The church was now crowded on a Sabbath. Calls came from larger churches in London and Glasgow. William Cunningham who heard his first lectures in divinity in Edinburgh spoke of 'the deep sense of the glory of God's presence' and the saintly Rabbi Duncan described him as 'a heavenly minded man'. It is great holiness that God blesses rather than great gifts.

## 3. Compassion for the needy

Jesus was moved when he saw suffering. A woman bent many years with infirmity drew out his sympathy as did blind Bartimaeus begging by the wayside or the weeping widow of Nain following her son's body to the grave. Chalmers, soon after his conversion, became actively involved in helping the poor of Kilmany. When he came to be minister of the Tron Church in Glasgow, the wealthy multitudes attending his church did not satisfy him for he saw the grinding, hopeless poverty of many around his church. He persuaded the city authorities to set up a new parish (St John's) encompassing 10,000 of the poorest of Glasgow. He divided the area into 25 districts and he appointed a deacon to look after the material needs of the 400 or so individuals in the district.

Even in his old age he was seen weeping over the depravity and destitution of the inhabitants of the West Port in Edinburgh. Soon he had visitors organised to help relieve the poverty, a school set up, a church built and Rev William Tasker appointed. Are we troubled today by the poverty and destitution we see even if it is caused by drink?

## 4. Evangelistic concern

Chalmers' primary concern was with the souls of men and women. In his preaching he freely offered Christ and pleaded with men and women to repent. Along with the deacons he appointed to each district in St John's (Glasgow) an elder who would bring the gospel and see to the spiritual needs. He himself was an indefatigable visitor. The story is told of a dying man who was asked if he wanted the visit of a minister. 'Yes,' he said, 'send for that man whom I turned away thirty times'. Many in Glasgow were converted under his ministry and his students too were characterised by evangelistic zeal. He stirred up M'Cheyne, the Bonars, Somerville and others to evangelistically visit the poorest parts of Edinburgh.

## 5. The Importance of preparing men for the ministry

Though Chalmers had a great sphere of labour in St John's in Glasgow, his doorbell ringing every few minutes with people enquiring about their souls, yet when the call came to teach Moral Philosophy at St Andrews he took up the challenge. He felt that the work of preparing men for the ministry was a higher and more important calling. He saw the relationship between philosophy and divinity as similar to that between the law and the gospel. Later, when invited to become professor of Moral Philosophy at London University, or Professor of Divinity in Edinburgh on a much lower wage, he chose Edinburgh. Several of his students at St Andrews became evangelical ministers and six became missionaries, of whom the most famous was Dr Duff, the missionary to India. Teaching divinity at Edinburgh he was at the very centre of the Church. He was the leader who stirred their hearts with a passion for Christ. Ninety per cent of his students joined the Free Church at the Disruption. Although few read Chalmers' writings today (*Works* 25 Volumes) those of his students – Cunningham, James Buchanan, the Bonars, Smeaton, Hugh Martin etc are widely read.

## 6. The Headship of Christ

Chalmers was by nature very conservative. He believed strongly in the Establishment Principle – the state is to support the true church and the church is to advise the state. However he also was firmly convinced of the headship of Christ alone over the church. Erastianism, the view held by the Anglican Church, in which the Queen (and so the civil government) is head of the church was anathema to him.

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He famously asserted at the Disruption that he left a vitiated establishment in the hopes of returning in due course to a pure one. He argued long and hard first in church courts and then with the civil courts and government against intrusionism – the idea that rich patrons or the civil authorities had the right to appoint ministers to churches against the wishes of the congregation. Further he believed that when the church courts discipline a man the civil courts have no right to interfere and restore such.

#### **7. Must obey God rather than men**

The Moderates believed that one should always obey the civil courts. Chalmers agreed that in civil matters this was the duty of the Christian. However if there was a conflict between the will of God and the dictates of men then, like the disciples of old who were commanded by the authorities not to speak or teach in the name of Jesus they replied, 'Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard (Acts 4:19-20). Increasingly today we too find ourselves in situations where we have to make choices. We 'honour the king', yet we fear God more.

#### **8. Catholic Emancipation**

Catholic emancipation raised interesting and controversial issues. Chalmers believed that instead of continuing to persecute the Roman Catholics of Ireland they should be given the vote and the freedom to practise their religion. He believed that the state should positively support the true church but should not persecute those who followed other faiths. He believed that the practices of the time were simply uniting the Irish as a nation against the throne of Britain and creating the glory of martyrdom. He asserted: 'Give me the circulation of the Bible and I will overthrow the tyranny of Antichrist and establish Christianity on its ruins'. Carnal weapons do not further the kingdom of God.

#### **9. The power of littles**

One of the challenges which faced Chalmers was to devise a system by which the church, once separated from the state, could survive. Up till this point the state provided the stipends for ministers. He came up with the idea of the Sustentation Fund. Collectors would go round the parish (he wished weekly but accepted monthly) and collect from every house. These pennies added up so that following the Disruption not only were the salaries of the 470 ministers who left the Established Church paid but also manses, churches and schools were built, and home and foreign mission work vastly expanded. Similarly when faced with the poverty of the city slums he believed that every little helped. Begin in a small area doing what you can and so set a pattern for others. If each member fulfils their role the body as a whole will function healthily.

#### **10. The tide can turn**

When Chalmers was growing up dead Moderatism controlled the Church of Scotland. But with God's blessing, first under the leadership of Andrew Thomson but then especially under the direction of Chalmers, the Church was transformed and the nation evangelised. J W Alexander of New York wrote when he visited Scotland in 1851: 'These few days in Scotland have shown me a permanent revival of religion... The preciousness of it is, that religion is founded on chapter and verse; free from outcry and sanctimony... I am among the best people on earth. A thousand times have I said to myself, "Oh if my father could just for one hour hear these prayers, and observe these fruits of unadulterated Calvinistic seed!" Here is the fruit of prayers sent up by Rutherfords and Bostons'. Oh that God would raise up another Chalmers! Oh that we would cry to Him in faith for the pouring out of His Spirit! He is able to use lesser men like us. But Oh that we would give all the glory to Him!



## **Lamentations**

### **Part III**

*Rev Gavin Beers*

**J**esus said of the Old Testament, 'Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they that testify of me' (Jn.5:39). This is true of all the Scriptures, and Lamentations is no exception. So where will we find the Saviour in this book of the Bible?

#### **1. Christ the Sufferer**

'Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger' (Lam.1:12).

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### **Unique Sufferings**

These words have often been taken as a reference to the sufferings of Christ but they actually concern Jerusalem's sufferings as she appeals to her neighbours for pity while holding out her condition as something without parallel. To apply the text directly to Christ is therefore unwarranted but Christ does indirectly answer the question the text poses.

Jerusalem asks 'Is there any sorrow like my sorrow?' Scripture answers yes, and directs us to the Cross and the truly unique sufferings of Christ; sufferings as unparalleled as they are unfathomable and as immense as they are unspeakable. All the graphic description of pain, anguish and sorrow experienced by Jerusalem and described in this book is in a real sense but a shadow of Christ's infinite sufferings. There is no sorrow like Messiah's sorrow.

### **Similar Sufferings**

Yet the sufferings of Christ and those of Jerusalem are similar in this – God did it! As God bade the Babylonians rise in judgment against His city so He summoned His sword to awake against His Son: 'Awake O sword against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow' (Zech.13:7). It was the Father's awful sword and not Roman cruelty that drew the cry, '*Eli; Eli, lama sabachthani*?' Furthermore, as Jerusalem here looked for one to take pity on her and comfort her, we are again reminded of the sufferings of Christ: 'Reproach hath broken my heart; and I am full of heaviness: and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none' (Ps.69:20).

In the descriptive poems of Lamentations there are also a number of texts that allude to the sufferings of Christ by the use of strikingly similar language. Compare Lam.2:15-16; 3:8; 3:30 with Ps.22:7-8, Mt.27:39-44; Ps.22:1-2, Mt.27:46; Isaiah 50:6. All such texts in Lamentations, if not direct prophetic references, are certainly illustrative of the Saviour's sufferings.

## **2. Christ the Sorrower**

### **Another Fall**

Jerusalem here laments her destruction in five funeral songs after the event occurred. However the city did not learn from her first fall but fell again in AD70 after rejecting Jesus the Messiah. In that later destruction the Jews turned again to the book of Lamentations, and still, on the anniversary of that fall in AD 70, Lamentations is read in their synagogues.

### **Another Lament**

Yet while on earth Christ predicted Jerusalem's fall and He also raised his own lament in view of the city's pending doom. 'And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! But now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee' (Lk.19:41-44).

### **Why does He weep?**

Allowing the text to speak for itself it is clear that He wept because He foresaw that Jerusalem would be destroyed and

her children would perish. Many prophets had published peace and the promise of the Messiah to many generations. Now He has come to save. It is Sunday and Jesus travels from Bethany to Jerusalem on a donkey. The road is thronged with pilgrims shouting 'Hosanna' which means 'Save now' (Ps.118:25-26, Mk.11:10). As He begins His descent of the Mount of Olives Jerusalem comes into view and in the midst of the surrounding jubilation He beheld the city and wept because despite the present cries of 'Hosanna' they would reject Him and perish.

Christ laments over Jerusalem just as Jeremiah and the remnant of Jews did who witnessed the city's previous fall. Because of this, Lamentations offers a window into the sorrow of Christ over the rebellious city upon whom covenant judgment would fall. Texts like Lam.2:11 are illustrative of His grief: 'Mine eyes do fail with tears, my bowels are troubled, my liver is poured upon the earth.'

## **3. Christ the Comforter**

'For these things I weep; mine eye, mine eye runneth down with water, because the comforter that should relieve my soul is far from me' (Lam.1:16).

### **The Comforter**

The Comforter spoken of here is understood by Jewish commentators to be Messiah. John Gill quotes the Babylonian Talmud and Rabbis such as Kimchi who says 'the name of Messiah is Menachem, the Comforter'. Among the texts they cite is Lam.1:16.

This is why the devout Simeon was one who 'waited for the Consolation, or Comforter, of Israel' (Lk.2:25) and when he saw the infant Christ in the Temple he took Him in his arms and said, 'Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation' (vv29-30). He recognised that the Comforter he waited for had come, 'a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of thy people Israel' (v32) – and what joy filled the heart of Simeon, Anna (v36) and others.

### **No Comforter**

But in Lam.1:16, the Comforter was looked for and not found. We understand by this that in the day of her desolation, Jerusalem looked for Messiah to deliver her from the hand of her enemies but He did not come. It was not His time to be revealed and sparing the city from Babylonian destruction was not the work the Father gave Him to do.

Yet while they could not find the Comforter presently, the faith of the remnant still lived on the promise of His coming and He remained their sole hope. In this way we are led to Christ by His absence in Lamentations. The Comforter did not come then but has now come, and 'the God of all comfort' has caused peace and consolation to abound toward sinners by Jesus Christ (2Cor.1:3-5).

## **4. Christ the Redeemer**

### **Offices of the Redeemer**

In the Old Testament Christ appeared in types and shadows in a number of ways. One such way was in the Messianic offices of prophet, priest and king. Our Catechism reminds us that these are the offices Christ executes as our Redeemer: A.23,

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‘Christ, as our Redeemer, executeth the offices of a prophet, of a priest and of a king, both in His estate of humiliation and exaltation.’

These offices in the Old Testament foreshadowed Christ, and not just the odd person who occupied the offices. The best of the prophets, priests and kings gloriously anticipated the coming of Christ while the worst of them in their failures reminded the people of their great need of Christ the Redeemer.

#### ***The Superiority of the Redeemer***

It is the latter that is in evidence in Lamentations, especially in chapter 4 where the terrible failure of Jerusalem’s civil and religious leaders is a major theme. Successive kings had been weak and foolish and failed to protect the people. Her prophets were liars and had denied the word of God to become men-pleasers. Her priests abused their office and were guilty of sacrilege. Philip Ryken comments: ‘Ultimately, what Jeremiah was looking for was the kind of leadership

that can only be found in Jesus Christ the true prophet, the holy priest and the servant king.’

#### ***Christ is the Answer***

So these laments, while they picture with sorrow the failure of the prophets, priests and kings of Judah, also preach the need for Christ. The message of Lamentations is that Christ is the answer!

He is the true Prophet who always speaks the Word of the Lord; He is the faithful High Priest who has made a perfect atonement and ever lives to make intercession for His people; He is the righteous King who shall reign and prosper and who subdues His people to Himself, ruling and defending them from all His and our enemies.

Christ is in Lamentations as He is in all the Scriptures. We see Him as the Sufferer, the Sorrower, the Comforter and the Redeemer that Jerusalem needed. Our desolate nation and our individual hearts need no more nor less than this Christ who is an all-sufficient and glorious Saviour of sinners and who is offered to all.

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## **A Better Case for Infant Baptism**

***Rev William Shisko***

*Pastor of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Franklin Square, NY, USA*

October 19, 2006, brought a long-awaited ‘great debate’ between Dr James White and myself on the topic, ‘Resolved: The subjects of Christian baptism are only those who have personally repented and believed in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord’.

Dr White, pastor of a Reformed Baptist church in Phoenix, Arizona, a well-known author, and the director of Alpha Omega Ministries (a Christian apologetics organisation), presented and defended the affirmative. I, as a ‘paedobaptist’, presented and defended the negative. Dr White and I have been friends for many years, and we approached the debate as Christian brothers and fellow servants of Christ. Many commented on that aspect of the debate. It was attended by perhaps five hundred people.

The purpose of this article is to reflect on this debate. We can learn from projects like this, and become better able to respond biblically to those who differ with us. (The entire debate may be downloaded from our church website, [opcli.org](http://opcli.org)).

### **Baptist Position**

All Baptists (including Reformed Baptists, who hold to the basic Calvinistic doctrines of salvation by sovereign grace) believe that the New Testament pattern is ‘Believe and be

baptised’. Infants, they say, cannot believe, and so should not be baptised. Reformed Baptists, such as James White, grasp the covenantal character of God’s dealings with his people, so they make a further argument from the nature of the new covenant (see Jer.31:31-34; Heb.8:7-13; 10:16-17). Because only those who ‘know the Lord’ and have received forgiveness of sins are part of the new covenant, only they (the regenerate) are to be baptised and received as part of the Christian church. This is a more sophisticated (but no less problematic) argument for the historic Baptist view that the church is composed only of the regenerate.

Reformed Baptists say that Presbyterians emphasise only the continuities in God’s covenantal dealings (what we call ‘the covenant of grace’), but do not see the discontinuities between the old and the new covenants. For Baptists, the essential discontinuity is that, in the new covenant, the church is not a ‘mixed multitude’ of the regenerate and the unregenerate, but rather a body of those who are ‘truly saved’, as evidenced by repentance and faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. The issue with our Baptist friends is, actually, more over the nature of the church than it is over the subjects of baptism.

On the surface, these arguments may seem compelling, particularly because the New Testament does speak frequently

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## "Baptist views cannot account for the language used of children in the New Testament. What did Jesus mean when He took little children and said, 'Of such is the kingdom of heaven?'"



(but not exclusively) of a person believing in Christ prior to his being baptised. What is the best way to present the traditional Presbyterian and Reformed view of the subjects of baptism in response to that?

### Presbyterian Response

1. We have not helped ourselves by beginning with the Old Testament covenants, and then working to the new covenant. It is far better to start with the New Testament data and then go back to the Old Testament roots. This puts us on the same 'turf' as the Baptists. We are too defensive about the New Testament! We should stop using the term 'paedobaptism' (baptism of infants) and use the more biblical expression 'oikobaptism' (baptism of households). The point is not that infants were baptised in the New Testament, but that *whole households* were baptised. There are specific references to household baptisms in the New Testament. See Acts 10; 16:15, 33; 1Cor.1:16 (a text which indicates that household baptisms were the norm in the apostolic age). Certainly in the missionary context of Acts, there had to be faith in new converts to Christianity before they could receive the sign and seal of Christian baptism (in the same way that Abraham received the sign and seal of circumcision only after he believed the promises of God, Rom.4:11-12). But even as whole families were received as part of the covenant people in all previous ages, so that pattern continues in the New Testament. If, in fact, this household principle was abrogated in the new covenant, one would not expect the household formula to be used as it is in the New Testament.

2. It is *not* the case that the New Testament always speaks of a person believing before he or she is baptised. Lydia is baptised with her household, but there is no mention of each member of that household exercising faith prior to baptism (Acts 16:14-15). And in the case of the Philippian jailer and his family, the text clearly speaks only of the faith of the jailer himself. Acts 16:34b literally reads, 'And he rejoiced with all his household, *he having believed in God*'. If the discontinuity of the new covenant is that only those who personally repent and believe in Christ are to be baptised and received as part of the church, why is that not clearly indicated in a text like this?

3. *All* of God's covenants have included families. Even the major prophecies of the new covenant clearly indicate the continuance of the household as the basic unit of the people of God. See Gen.12:3; Is.54:10, 13; 59:21 (the Old Testament backdrop to Acts 2:39); 61:8-9; Jer.32:38-40; Ezek.37:25-26; Zech.8:5; 10:7, 9; 12:10-14; 14:17. In response to the use of the new covenant passages made by our Baptist friends, we must show that in those very passages the household principle remains as an aspect of the new covenant. If noble Christians 'searched the Scriptures' (ie, the Old Testament) to find out whether the things taught by the apostles were so (Acts 17:11), where would they have found warrant to abrogate the household principle? (I am indebted to G I Williamson for this significant observation.)

4. Baptist views cannot account for the language used of children in the New Testament. While it is true that Jesus did not baptise little children, what did He mean when He took little children and said, 'Of such is the kingdom of heaven' (Mt.19:13-15; Mk.10:13-16; Lk.18:15-17)? If, as our Baptist friends say, Jesus was simply speaking of childlike faith, He could have (would have?) used an adult with childlike faith as an object lesson, but He did not. On a Baptist model, how are children regarded as part of the kingdom of heaven (the visible representation of which is the church)?

Children of at least one believing parent are regarded as 'holy' – separated unto God (1Cor.7:14). How are they regarded as such on a Baptist model? It is an evasion to say that this means the children of at least one believing parent are 'legitimate'. Paul would not have used a term connected with covenantal holiness if he wanted to say this. (Besides, children are 'legitimate' whenever they are born in the context of the marital union.)

On a Baptist model, how is it that children are included among 'the saints' in Ephesians 6:1-3 and Colossians 3:20 (cf Eph.1:1; Col.1:2)? Paul gives specific instructions to husbands, wives, children, and servants because these were the basic constituents of a *household* in the first century. How can our Baptist friends instruct the children of their believing adults to 'obey your parents *in the Lord*' (Eph.6:1)? 'In the Lord' does not mean that children should only obey 'Christian' parents. Rather, it indicates that children

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should obey their parents in the context of their covenantal connection to Jesus Christ – which is signified and sealed in baptism. On a ‘household baptism’ model, all of this makes sense. Baptist responses in any of the standard treatments are lame, at best.

5. Can our Baptist friends point to one church that is composed only of the regenerate? This is the Achilles heel of any Baptist view. In the new heavens and the new earth, when the new covenant will be consummated, only the elect will compose the church. Until then, even the best of Baptist churches and any other Christian church will be composed of both regenerate and unregenerate people. Hence, there are stern warnings addressed to people in the church (eg Heb.6:4-6; 10:26-36). There are calls to examine ourselves, to see *whether* we are in the faith (2Cor.13:5). Paul has doubts about those in Galatia who had professed faith and been baptised, but were falling back into legalism (Gal.4:19-20). Simon the sorcerer ‘believed’ (outwardly) and was baptised (Acts 8:13), yet he was hardly regenerate (see Acts 8:21-23). People left the church because they never were truly a part of it (1Jn.2:19). Whole churches were threatened with Christ’s judgments because they had left their first love, given in to sexual immorality and false doctrine, and become lukewarm;

they had the reputation of being alive, but they were dead (Rev.2, 3). These are new covenant realities, and they are hardly the realities of a fully regenerate church!

6. What exactly *is* a Baptist theology of children, and how can it be aligned with the specific passages of the New Testament that deal with children? On a household baptism view, we can develop a coherent view of children and the church that does justice to all of the material of the Old and New Testaments. It is the inability of our Baptist friends (including Reformed Baptists) to present such a view that has caused many Baptists who have got a taste of covenant theology to abandon the so-called credobaptist (believer’s baptism) view and become believers in household baptism. One recent Baptist writer stated, ‘The true test for anyone’s theology is this: Does it do justice to all the biblical data?’ It is precisely for this reason that we maintain the baptism of whole households and the theology of God’s covenant, the church, and children that undergirds the practice. In this, and in all theological debates, may we present our views graciously, unapologetically, and above all *biblically!*

*Reprinted with permission from New Horizons, March 2008.*



## John Knox and Education in Scotland

*Rev Maurice Roberts*

On the 27th April, 1560 ‘all the nobility, barons and gentlemen professing Christ Jesus in Scotland’ contracted to ‘set forward the reformation of religion according to God’s Word... that the truth of God’s Word may have free passage within this realm’ and to recover their ‘ancient freedoms and liberties.’ So wrote the great Scottish reformer, John Knox, in his celebrated *History*. It was a historic moment in Scotland. Queen Elizabeth in England was sympathetic towards the Protestant struggle in Scotland. Mary of Lorraine had been ‘deprived’ of the Regency since November 1559. The Great Council of the Realm was now commissioning the ministers of Christ in Scotland to write down their formula for the reformation of religion. Amongst the proposals made by Knox and his fellow reformers were regulations for education. These ecclesiastical and educational proposals were written in what was called the First Book of Discipline and it was subscribed

in the Tolbooth of Edinburgh on 27th January, 1561. John Knox and his brethren were setting out vital principles for the establishment of the Reformed Church of Scotland throughout the whole realm and educational provisions were regarded by these reformers as essential to their work. The relevant section of the reformers’ work is entitled *For the Schooles*.

The First Book of Discipline took the view that the government of the day or civil magistrate should be responsible for the education of the youth, but it was to be an education which was carefully defined by the reformers themselves. They say it is to be an educational system set up to promote ‘the virtuous education and godly upbringing of the youth of this realm.’ They look to the future with a vision of succeeding generations of young people brought up in the Christian faith and able to help in church and state: ‘For as the youth must succeed to us so we ought to be careful that they have

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knowledge and erudition to profit and comfort that which ought to be most dear to us, to wit, the Kirk and spouse of our Lord Jesus’.

The provision stated that every Kirk was to have one schoolmaster appointed who could teach grammar and the Latin language. It was also envisaged that the first rudiments of the Catechism should also be taught to the young people. For this the Geneva Catechism of Calvin was translated into the English language. At a later age children were expected to attend a college. The ablest scholars would then proceed to one of the three universities. These were located in St Andrews, Glasgow and Aberdeen. (The University of Edinburgh was established a few years later.)

It is of particular importance to notice that this education was to be obligatory on all the young men of the land. Fathers especially were to be compelled ‘to bring up their children in learning and virtue’. ‘The rich... may not be permitted to suffer their children to spend their youth in vain idleness as heretofore they have done. But they must be exhorted and by the censure of the Kirk compelled to dedicate their sons by good exercises (studies) to the profit of the Kirk and Commonwealth...’ The rich were to pay for their own sons’ education but the children of the poor were to be ‘supported and sustained of (by) the charge of the Kirk’. In order to have standards maintained, ‘discreet, brave and learned men were to be appointed to visit schools for the trial (inspection) of their exercise, profit and continuance’. The provision stated that the minister and elders and other learned men in every town were to conduct this examination.

Secular subjects, of course, were to be studied in the school but the emphasis was upon gaining a knowledge of the Christian religion. It was expected that children should have a knowledge of God’s law and commandments, the chief Articles of the Faith, the correct way to pray to God, to understand the number and nature of the sacraments, and to appreciate who Christ is and how he exercises His offices as the Redeemer. Without such knowledge, they said, a man did not ‘deserve to be called a Christian neither ought to be admitted to the participation of the Lord’s Table’. The reformers were conscious that such reforms in education as they proposed in the First Book of Discipline would lead to great moral and spiritual benefits throughout the country. This is exactly what did happen throughout Scotland in the following years.

The above, in briefest possible form, summarises the vision which John Knox and the other Scottish reformers had at the time of the Reformation for raising educational standards throughout Scotland. It is no accident that in the four hundred and more years which have elapsed Scottish education has been proverbial for its excellence. Its influence has gone throughout the world.

One or two brief comments are in place here:

I. It is clear that of first importance in education in the view of the reformers was the need to have young minds thoroughly taught in the doctrines of the Word of God. Bible study is essential but catechetical and doctrinal

understanding of the Word of God is of fundamental importance.

II. Financial provision for such a scheme of education should be according to the means of parents. The rich were to pay for the education of their own children either in whole or in part. The poor were to have their education mainly paid for out of the funds which were derived from the patrimony of the Church. In practice, this proved to be difficult as greedy barons wished to lay their own hands on these funds. Education can be expensive and it would be a great help today if Christian schools could either be fully supported by the state or else if wealthy Christian friends would place monies in a trust or fund to support the children of poor families.

III. The vision in education was not for ‘secular’ service but for the service of God. This might well be in the ministry of the church but could also be in a civil capacity of some sort. The view of the reformers was that all work comes from the call of God, secular as well as spiritual. In all our work God is to be served.

IV. The scheme of education provided for education from the earliest years of childhood right up to the university. The schools and universities were to be open to persons of ability right the way through. In a system like this every encouragement was given to able students to make the best of their God-given talents and then to go out and serve God in society by devoting their lives to the good of their fellow men in their chosen profession.

V. The foundation of all life must be built upon the Word of God. Therefore the reformers taught that a sound understanding of the Word of God is fundamental.

In conclusion we have to say that Knox and the Scottish reformers were entirely supportive of the view that education should be specifically Christian. The secular educational mentality which came in at the end of the nineteenth century in Scotland after the Education (Scotland) Act of 1872 is something with which Knox and the reformers would have had no sympathy.

The society in which we live today reflects the classroom and the educational theory which lies behind it. It is piously to be hoped and prayed for that the principles of Knox and the reformers might be recovered for our school system in this country again. If this is not done then our society can only go farther and farther from the truth and from standards of decency. Christians everywhere in Britain must give careful attention to the whole subject of Christian schools and Christian education. It is surely now a top priority subject.

May God help parents and educators in our land to see again the vision of Knox and his brethren for educating the youth of Scotland. It would be a cheering prospect if the people of Scotland would begin to see the need to recover their Reformation heritage and to implement it in their educational provisions.



# News



## Moderator-Designate

The Moderator-designate of the next General Assembly is the Rev Bill Scott. Born in a miner's row in Penicuik, Rev Bill Scott is far from the stereotypical Free Church minister. Educated at the local primary school and then at Lasswade Senior Secondary School, he played rugby for his school. An extremely keen musician, he went on to study music to a professional level at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music.

It was during his time there that he was first confronted with the truth of the Gospel and the claim of Christ on his life. Up to that point he had known next to nothing of Christianity. Bill was responsible, along with two female students, for forming the Christian Union at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music. One of these, Isobel Campbell from Evanton, introduced him to the Free Church of Scotland;

their relationship blossomed and they married. They have two grown-up children.

Very conscious of a deep sense of calling to the ministry, he undertook further studies at Edinburgh University and the Free Church College, Edinburgh, while in his 'free' time assisting city missionaries, carrying out open air preaching, conducting a Sunday School within their own small flat and later, while living in Kennoway, Fife, during the final part of his studies, undertaking outreach work in the community there.

Mr Scott's interest in the church reaches far beyond Scotland. An interest in the work of the church in Eastern Europe began during his student days and developed greatly over the years which followed, with a considerable amount of his time being devoted to the organisation Eastern Europe for Christ.

On completion of his studies in the Free Church College, it was in missionary service in Moyobamba, Peru, that they spent the first four years. On their return to Scotland, Mr Scott took up the pastorate of the scattered congregations of the Duthill-Dores charge, in Inverness-shire, where he remained for some six years. Never a man to seek an easy life, he then took on the responsibility of ministering to the congregation of Dumfries.

Now officially retired, his interest in Eastern Europe continues unabated and more extended trips are now possible. Isobel, a talented composer, and Bill have also been engaged in developing a programme of instruction in singing for use in churches. This will be his second time in the Moderator's chair.

## Religious Discrimination

*Christian Institute*

A Brighton care home for elderly Christians has lost thousands of pounds of funding from the local council because of its religious beliefs on homosexuality. Brighton Council – renowned for its political correctness – wanted the home to ask its elderly Christian residents about their sexual orientation every three months. Residents at the Brighton home are made up of 39 single Christians aged over 80, including former missionaries and a retired church minister. The council also wanted the home to use images of homosexuals in its promotional literature and show a Stonewall presentation on 'gay rights' to staff. Managers at the care home explained that to comply with the demands would unduly distress the elderly residents and undermine the home's Christian ethos.

But council officials accused the home of "institutionalised homophobia" and pulled £13,000 of funding which was being used to support a warden. The Pilgrim Homes charity, which runs the home and others like it, has spent months seeking to resolve the matter with the local authority. But having reached an impasse it has told the council of its intention to take legal action for religious discrimination. The case is being backed financially by The Christian Institute's Legal Defence Fund.

## Children's Psalm Singing

Under the auspices of the Free Church (Continuing), there will be, God willing, a time of Psalm-singing for the children of our congregations

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# Desk

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in the Community Education Centre, Ashgrove, Blackburn, West Lothian on Saturday 7th March 2009 from 11.00am – 2.30pm. This meeting is to promote the learning and love of singing the Psalms, to support the test programme set out by the Church and to give our children opportunity to be together in such an environment. It would be helpful if the children could learn at least 6 tunes from the 2008/09 Psalmody Test list before they come. The following are suggested: St Paul (Ps.122:1), St Andrew (Ps.139:1), Jackson (Ps.27:1), St. Olave (Ps.70:1), Westminster (Ps.2:4), Wiltshire (Ps.23:6). It will be necessary for people to bring their own packed lunch. A follow-up to this meeting is planned for 28th March in the same venue and at the same time. At this second meeting the children who wish to participate in the test can be assessed. Parents, please support this venture, and bring your children along.

## Youth Weekend

The next Arbroath weekend away is, God willing, due to take place between Friday 6 February 2009 and Monday 9 February 2009. The speaker this year is Rev William Macleod (Knightswood Church) and his topic is 'The end of the world'. Any young folk interested should contact Murray Mackay on [murray.mackay@googlemail.com](mailto:murray.mackay@googlemail.com) or tel. 0141 561 1465.

## Snizort Farewell

On Saturday 29th November the Snizort congregation gathered for a surprise tea to bid farewell to Rev and Mrs Kenneth MacDonald. After eleven years serving the congregation



*Mr & Mrs MacDonald with the Sabbath School children*

in Snizort, the Lord had called them to a new ministry in Scalpay. The Sabbath School provided afternoon tea with lots of lovely baking supplied by the ladies of the congregation. Presentations were then made to Rev and Mrs MacDonald by the Sabbath School children and by the Deacons' Court on behalf of the congregation. Congregational elders Angus Shaw, John Bain, Roddy MacKay and Angus MacDonald all made reference to their affection for, and sadness felt at the departing of, their Minister. They assured Mr MacDonald of their continued prayers for him as he takes up his new charge. Mrs Chrissie Macinnes, in presenting Mrs MacDonald with her gift, spoke movingly about their sadness to be losing Mrs MacDonald from the manse, but also of their thankfulness for all the years they had spent together in sweet fellowship. Mr MacDonald then replied. He thanked the congregation for all their

kindness to him and his wife, and said that he would always have a great love for and prayerful interest in the congregation at Snizort.

There was also a special presentation to Mrs Anne Shaw to mark her retirement as Sabbath School teacher. The children presented gifts and Mrs Lillian Macinnes thanked Mrs Shaw for her years of service and presented her with a Bible on behalf of the congregation. It was with heavy hearts and not a few tears that they wished their minister and his dear wife God's richest blessing in their new charge in Scalpay and their prayer is that the Lord will use them mightily there.

## Ladele Case

*Christian Institute*

On Friday, 19th December 2008 the Employment Appeal Tribunal published their ruling which overturns a previous decision that found in



*Miss Ladele*

favour of Miss Lillian Ladele, the registrar who faced the sack after she asked to be exempt from registering same-sex civil partnerships. The ruling states:

'The council were not taking disciplinary action against Ms Ladele for holding her religious beliefs; they did so because she was refusing to carry out civil partnership ceremonies and this involved discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation.

'The council were entitled to take the view that they were not willing to connive in that practice by relieving Ms Ladele of these duties, notwithstanding that her refusal was the result of her strong and genuinely held Christian beliefs.

'The council were entitled to take the view that this would be inconsistent with their strong commitment to the principles of non-discrimination and would send the wrong message to staff and service users.'

Colin Hart, the Director of the Christian Institute, said: 'Gay rights are not the only rights. If this decision is allowed to stand it will help squeeze out Christians from the public sphere because of their religious beliefs on ethical issues.'

Miss Ladele intends to appeal the ruling to the Court of Appeal.

## Zambia Appeal – Thanks

Rev JJ Murray

The Home and Foreign Missions Committee would like to thank all who responded so generously to the appeal for a vehicle for the Christian Schools Association in Zambia. This was required for Miss Marjanne Hendriksen, the Dutch educationalist, in her work of visiting bush schools for the training of teachers. The vehicle cost about £11,000 and the amount has been met and the appeal is now closed.

It was fitting that Miss Hendriksen was able to make a short visit to the congregations of our Church in early December 2008. All the arrangements were undertaken by Mr Cammy Macleay, to whom we are greatly indebted. Miss Hendriksen gave a power point presentation of her work in meetings at Stornoway, Snizort, Inverness and Glasgow. She met with the Ladies Groups in Edinburgh, Lewis, Skye and Glasgow. She was greatly impressed with the warmth of the reception given to her and had not realised that so many people and groups in Scotland were praying for her and the Mission. She thanked all those who had contributed to the appeal for the vehicle. During her visit the amount of £711 was raised at the meetings and £1160 contributed by the Ladies' Groups for the CSA.

## Gather up the Fragments!

Mary Gillies

With just five loaves and two fish, our Lord fed 5,000 men and they were all well satisfied. Why then did he issue the command, 'Gather up the fragments that remain?' Who needed any more?

When the remaining pieces of those five loaves were gathered, they filled twelve baskets. Perhaps each disciple took one home for his hungry children. Perhaps they were given to the poor. All we know is Christ's concern 'that nothing be lost'.

I would like this to encourage all tax payers to make sure they have signed a Gift Aid form. Truly the Lord has provided wonderfully for us as a denomination. We should praise Him often for His care. We have not lacked since the day we began until now. God has opened the hearts of many of His people to give most sacrificially – some leaving but little for themselves. And yet He says, 'Gather up the fragments that remain that nothing be lost'.

Are there some who, like the lad, willingly give their loaves and fish, yet allow that fragment which we call **tax** to be lost?

**In signing a Gift Aid Form, you are not promising to bring still more loaves and fish, or even that you will bring some for a year.** No. You are only saying that you give permission for the disciples to gather up the fragments of *anything* you bring *whenever* you can bring it.

Perhaps someone will ask, 'What can you do with a few crumbs?' Maybe the disciples themselves thought this when the Lord gave the command, yet to their surprise they filled

twelve baskets. Can I illustrate this with a recent example? Think of the Zambia Vehicle Appeal. Together you raised £9914. When we gathered the fragments they came to £1540. And so we were able to send £11,454 for the purchase of the beautiful new vehicle for the College.

Though 2009 does not promise to be financially prosperous, yet the Lord's promise is abundant. 'Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.'



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## Glorious Things of Thee are Spoken!

*John Newton*

Glorious things of thee are spoken,  
Zion, city of our God!  
He, whose Word cannot be broken,  
Formed thee for His own abode.

On the Rock of Ages founded,  
What can shake thy sure repose?  
With salvation's walls surrounded,  
Thou may'st smile at all thy foes.

See! the streams of living waters,  
Springing from eternal love;  
Well supply thy sons and daughters,  
And all fear of want remove:

Who can faint while such a river  
Ever flows their thirst t'assuage?  
Grace, which like the Lord, the Giver,  
Never fails from age to age.

Round each habitation hovering,  
See the cloud and fire appear!  
For a glory and a cov'ring  
Showing that the Lord is near.

Thus deriving from our banner  
Light by night and shade by day;  
Safe they feed upon the manna  
Which He gives them when they pray.

Blest inhabitants of Zion,  
Washed in the Redeemer's blood!  
Jesus, whom their souls rely on,  
Makes them kings and priests to God.

'Tis His love His people raises,  
Over self to reign as kings,  
And as priests, His solemn praises  
Each for a thank offering brings.

Saviour, if of Zion's city,  
I through grace a member am,  
Let the world deride or pity,  
I will glory in Thy Name.

Fading is the worldling's pleasure,  
All his boasted pomp and show;  
Solid joys and lasting treasure  
None but Zion's children know.

## The King's Visit Psalm 72

*Rev James Clark*

"He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass:  
as showers *that* water the earth."

**Psalm 72:6**

The doctrine taught in the text is that Christ's gracious communications from the life that is within Himself are essential for the comfort, strength and prosperity of His church. Without this refreshing the church is like the mown grass, languishing for heaven's moisture. When favoured with these manifestations it is 'like a field which the Lord hath blessed'.

We are thus warranted from the text to look for gracious visitations to the church. They are desired (Song of Sol.1:2). But we must not regard the text as pertaining to future prophecy only. It has a history in the experience of every individual believing member of Christ's church. The individual's spiritual history began when Christ came secretly into the heart, without pomp and ceremony, to take possession and set up His throne there. The previous spiritual barrenness is removed by the refreshing dew of His Spirit. This 'early rain' still comes, before the 'latter'.

There are means and evidences whereby these blessings promised in the text are obtained. When Christ so comes down to refresh His people it is generally found:

- 1) that they have been stirred up, with spiritual motives, to earnestly desire this manifestation
- 2) that they have been moved to heartfelt repentance and solemn prayer
- 3) that they have resolved to walk with God according to all His precepts and resist worldliness
- 4) that they are enlightened to give greater honour to the Holy Spirit than they did before and have a deeper sense of their absolute dependence upon His gracious operations applying the fullness in Christ to their soul's need.

There are many cries for revival and we badly need it. But what is our motive and by what means will it come? Is it a cry of repentance and a cry for Christ's presence? The danger of complacency is always present in the church. It is when we decrease that Christ will increase.



# Books

## 365 days with Calvin

Edited by Dr Joel Beeke

DayOne and Reformation Heritage Books, hbk, 397pp, £12.00

There are many books of daily readings of which Spurgeon's *Morning and Evening* is the most famous. Here we have a new and valuable one – selections by Dr Beeke from Calvin's Commentaries and Sermons. The selections have been edited to make them very readable. The text is given, followed by a suggested further reading, then the main section based on the text and finally a few sentences for meditation or application. Calvin is reliable, fresh and experimental and the selections are carefully made. The book could be an edifying addition to your devotions throughout the coming year.

For example, commenting on, 'Though I walk in the midst of trouble...' (Ps.138:7) Calvin writes: 'From this we are taught that God chooses to exercise His children with continual conflict, so that, having one foot in the grave, they may flee with alarm to hide themselves under His wings, where they may abide in peace'. For meditation we are to consider this: 'Rather than shrinking from enemies or danger, let us place our confidence in the Lord; He alone is willing and able to save us. This ought to give us peace even in a world of troubles where enemies abound.'

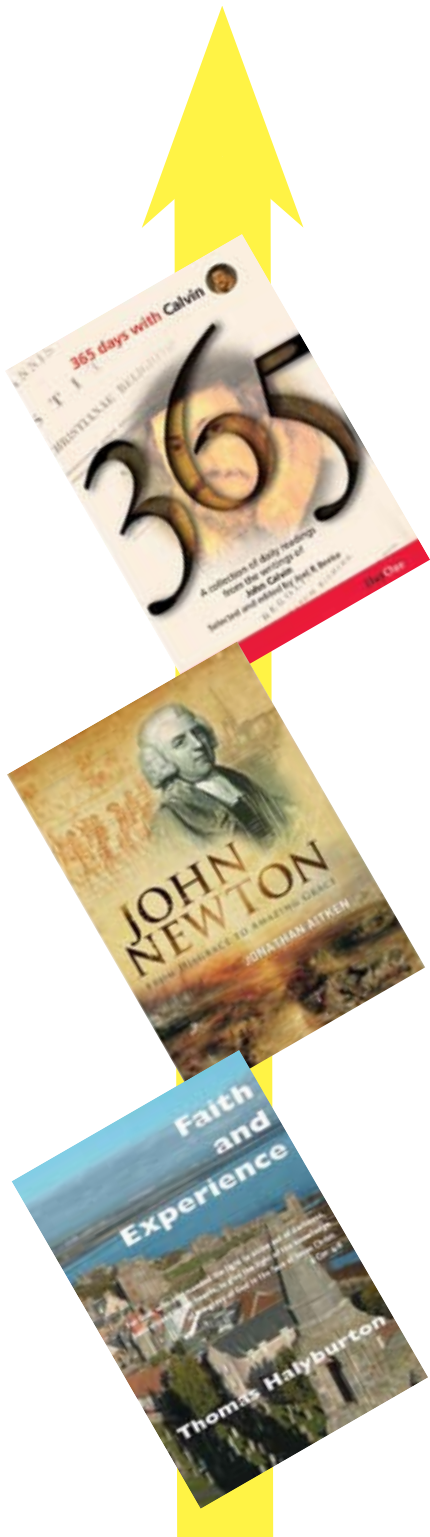
## John Newton – From Disgrace to Amazing Grace

Jonathan Aitken

Continuum, hbk, 308pp, £16.99

The life-story of John Newton is stranger than fiction. His godly mother died when he was six but left a deep mark upon him. His father who was a sea captain, while he showed little love to him after remarrying, yet rescued him time and again. As a young man he fell in love with

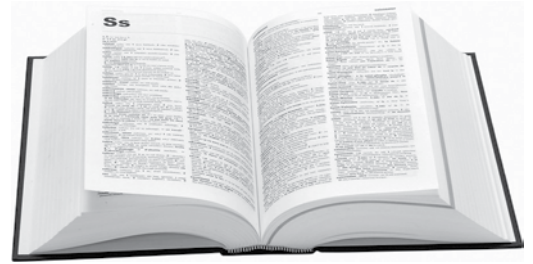
a 13-year-old cousin Polly and this was a restraint upon him when he several times contemplated suicide. He became an atheist, lived in all kinds of debauchery and was a notorious blasphemer. Time and again he escaped from death by a hair's breadth. While working for a slave trader in Africa he was falsely accused of stealing by his boss's black mistress and was put in chains. He became a slave to slaves. Suffering from severe hunger he crept into the fields to eat raw roots at night. He suffered constant diarrhoea. Other slaves would feel sorry for him and share their rations with him. As he laboured there under the hot sun planting lime trees his master mocked him saying that one day he might be the captain of a ship and gather limes from these trees. Amazingly this happened. On his way back from Africa the ship he travelled in seemed sure to sink in a severe storm with a huge hole in the bows. Only then standing at the wheel for two days while others manned the pumps did Newton pray, and as he put it so vividly, God heard the cry of the ravens. His life changed. He married Polly whom he often feared he idolised. He became the captain of a slave trader. Later he became a minister, first at Olney and then in London. His books became very popular. He carried out a great ministry through letters. He encouraged Wilberforce to remain in politics when he wanted to become a minister and then assisted him in his great campaign for the abolition of slavery. Success was achieved by the passing of the Act abolishing the slave-trade shortly before his death, aged eighty-two, in 1807. As his memory was failing his friends tried to persuade him to stop preaching. He replied 'I cannot stop. What! Shall the old African blasphemer stop while he can speak?' Near the end of his life he said to William Jay: 'My memory is nearly gone but I remember two things:



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# Books



that I am a great sinner and that Christ is a great Saviour’.

This modern biography is well researched and very readable. There is much here to edify and stir the soul. For example, the account of the death of his adopted daughter Eliza. He had lovingly taught the gospel to her for the two years that she lived with them. At the age of fourteen she was dying of consumption (TB). Newton kept a record of her last days. Eventually she was coughing up blood and had difficulty breathing. When the doctor on his final visit asked her how she was, she replied, ‘Truly happy; and if this is dying it is a pleasant thing to die.’ The day of her death, Newton records, ‘About five in the afternoon she desired me to pray with her once more. Surely I then prayed from my heart. When I had finished, she said Amen. I said, “My dear child, have I expressed your meaning?” She answered, “Oh yes”, and then added, “I am ready. Why are His chariot wheels so long in coming? But I hope He will enable me to wait His hour with patience”. These were the last words I heard her speak. A few minutes later she was gone. What a testimony! Oh that we too would be ready!’

*Rev William Macleod*

## **Memoirs of Thomas Halyburton**

*Edited by Joel R Beeke*

**Reformation Heritage Books,  
hbk, 317pp, (now out of print  
but presently available in Vol.4 of  
Halyburton’s Works, entitled *Faith  
and Experience* published by the  
James Begg Society, £13.00)**

This interesting instructive autobiography forms Volume 2 of the Reformed Experiential Thought

series in the Reformation Heritage Books. Out of print for nearly 150 years, Halyburton’s *Memoirs* had become a rare and highly sought after possession by discerning Christian people. Dr ‘Rabbi’ Duncan gave it an equal place in his estimation alongside Augustine’s Confessions and Bunyan’s autobiography, *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*. As Dr Sinclair Ferguson says in his helpful Introduction, ‘In some respects this work may have more practical value because of the explicit way in which Halyburton constantly reflects on and dissects his own experience in the light of Scripture and in a systematic and analytical fashion.’ Halyburton (1674-1712), son of a minister who had suffered under the persecution of Covenanting times, was educated in Rotterdam where his widowed mother had fled as a refugee with her family. A warning given to him by an old minister after his return from exile made a lasting impression upon the young schoolboy, ‘Unsanctified learning has done much mischief to the Kirk of God’. His life was short but fruitful to the glory of God. Ordained to the parish of Ceres, Fife in 1700, he was in 1710 appointed Professor of Divinity in St Andrews, he himself giving no encouragement to the idea. ‘Lord, crush it, if it be not for thy glory. Herein I have peace, that I had no hand in it’. Such was the unfeigned humility of this eminent servant of Christ whose great delight was simply to preach the gospel of Christ. He entered his everlasting rest only two years later just before his 38<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Halyburton’s *Works* provide an insight to his ministry with its emphasis upon regeneration and its immediate effect, saving faith in and union to Jesus Christ but it is his *Memoirs* with

their close self-analysis recording his spiritual exercises from his youth and the steps of God’s providential leading and teaching that proved most popular and influential and a blessing to humble uneducated believers as well as to notable theologians such as Archibald Alexander, Charles Hodge, Hugh Martin and John Duncan.

As in the case of his other writings, his *Memoirs* were published posthumously. Originally prepared by him for family members and close friends, his widow yielded to the persuasions of judicious friends to release them for publication – a decision for which many have had reason for thankfulness to God. David Brown in his *Life of Dr Duncan* quotes Duncan as saying: ‘I advise every theologian to acquaint himself with Halyburton. He neither understates nor overstates the value of the Law to the Gospel and the necessity of the Law to the Gospel. I like his view of a man’s acceptance of the Gospel as a cordial approbation of God’s way of recovering man’. This is clearly brought out in the *Memoirs* with their plain, candid, honest examination of the sinfulness of his own heart and the wonderful deliverances from temptation he experienced. There is no display of erudition here but the concern of a humble self-effacing sinner taught by the Holy Spirit to magnify the free unmerited grace of God. Nor is there any shallowness in his treatment of the faith that saves the lost sinner. For him Christ is all both in life and in death.

Dr Beeke, in his edition, mentions the lasting impression made on him when he first read these *Memoirs* as a teenager – an experience which I shared when I first read them over 50 years ago! Highly recommended!

*Rev Ronald MacKenzie*

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# The White Rose

## A Personal Testimony (From MWTB.org)

One evening last summer I walked slowly along the Thames embankment toward the place where I was to preach. A strange reluctance had slowed my steps and I stood for a moment looking down into the slow water, thinking back on the centuries of history and drama its banks had witnessed. I wondered how many of the thousands that had walked along these banks had known the peace of God.

I turned to go, but my attention was suddenly caught by the movement of a young woman who had risen from one of the benches near the water and approached the edge of the embankment purposefully. Something in her attitude put a chill in my heart, so I walked toward her.

'Excuse me', I began quietly. She turned nervously and looked wildly around as though wanting to escape. Her eyes, filled with depths of sorrow and disillusionment, startled even me who was accustomed to meeting life's derelicts every day in a mission hall in London.

'Forgive a stranger's speaking to you', I said, 'but I am a minister, on my way to the Gospel Hall around the next corner. You are distressed and troubled. Would you come to the service tonight? There you can find rest from your trouble in One who is ready to be your Friend.'

At my mention of the word 'minister', her face fell, and she said indignantly, 'No, I don't want to go to your meeting. Leave me alone.'

Earlier in the afternoon, my hostess had presented me with a perfect white rose. Though I would not have chosen to wear a buttonhole, I felt I should accept it. Now, acting on an impulse I did not understand, I took the rose from my lapel and held it out to her. It was a strange gesture but I dared not disobey what I felt to be the leading of the Spirit.

'Will you accept this white rose?' I asked gently. 'Perhaps it will remind you that there are friends who want to help you if you will come.'

'No – oh no!' she gasped. She drew back as though I had struck her. Mixed emotions struggled in her face. Then, she reached out and grasped the rose, and I saw there were tears on her face. I had to go, but invited her once more to come. As I finished speaking that evening, I saw, back in the corner, the young woman to whom I had spoken on the embankment. She suddenly rose to her feet, walked forward

and began to speak, apparently unaware of the curious gaze of the congregation.

'I've been listening to the invitations to 'come to Jesus' and I want to come. Do you think He could save such a sinner as I am?' she asked brokenly.

'I was going to end it all tonight in the river because I couldn't go on any longer in the life I've lived for five years. I was just ready to jump when that gentleman there spoke to me and asked me to come here. I rudely refused him. And then he gave me this white rose. I didn't want it at first, but then I had to take it. It was like the rose my mother gave me when I left home five years ago. It was her favourite flower.

'As I took this rose tonight, I heard again her voice as she said me goodbye. 'Ellen, my dear, you are leaving your mother much against her wish, to go into a sinful world and, I fear, into a sinful life. When you are far away and you see a white rose, remember that your mother's parting gift to you will be followed by prayer for the return of her child. Neither day nor night will I cease to pray that God may bring you home again, saved.'

'This pure, white rose brought me to my senses tonight. I knew I had to find the way, if it is open to me. The minister said there was One who would help me. Do you think He would accept a sinner like me?'

It was not difficult to answer her question. 'Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow'. 'For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life' (Isaiah 1:18; John 3:16).

She listened attentively as we gave these and other verses, then bursting into tears she dropped to her knees, turned to God in repentance and prayer and, I believe, trusted the Lord Jesus as her Saviour. She arose a new creature in Christ. Her first desire was to get home to her mother. The years have passed, but this one snatched from the very jaws of suicidal death is still rejoicing in Christ and ever eager to witness to Christ's saving power.



**"Neither day nor night will I cease to pray that God may bring you home again, saved."**

# Congregational Remittances - 2008

	2008 Dec	2008 Total	2007 Total to Dec		2008 Dec	2008 Total	2007 Total to Dec
<b>Presbytery of Inverness</b>				<b>Outer Hebrides Presbytery</b>			
Aberdeen	800	9,581	7,288	Cross	4,025	25,308	23,488
Duthil-Dores	4,249	29,301	21,608	Harris - Leverburgh	2,539	14,424	13,312
Inverness	5,500	31,500	30,000	Harris - Scalpay	2,160	18,537	20,601
Kilmorack	2,425	17,588	19,587	Knock & Point	2,452	12,974	12,559
<b>Total Inverness</b>	<b>12,975</b>	<b>87,970</b>	<b>78,483</b>	North Uist	4,742	15,001	11,072
<b>Northern Presbytery</b>				Stornoway	9,332	64,742	71,386
Assynt & Scourie	3,157	5,727	10,032	<b>Total Hebrides</b>	<b>25,251</b>	<b>150,985</b>	<b>152,419</b>
Brora	3,141	20,409	20,394	<b>Presbytery of Skye &amp; Lochcarron</b>			
Kiltearn	1,800	19,200	20,400	Bracadale	1,771	15,000	13,697
Tarbat	11,285	19,259	17,220	Duirinish	200	5,000	5,303
<b>Total Northern</b>	<b>19,382</b>	<b>64,595</b>	<b>68,047</b>	Arnisdale	252	2,000	1,870
<b>Southern Presbytery</b>				Staffin	3,045	18,620	18,118
Arran	889	6,697	7,049	Lochalsh	3,304	17,500	16,000
Ayr	731	3,191	2,892	Aultbea	2,241	13,775	14,097
Dumfries	0	0	85	Portree	5,700	22,906	19,621
Edinburgh	0	23,761	33,467	Snizort	3,384	23,445	21,486
Glas. - Partick	8,000	34,000	32,000	Strath	0	5,016	6,636
Glas. - Shettleston	4,158	14,898	15,324	<b>Total Skye</b>	<b>19,896</b>	<b>123,261</b>	<b>116,829</b>
Glas. - Thornwood	3,211	24,613	24,135	<b>Total Congs.</b>			
Rothsay	141	1,472	2,046	<b>94,634</b>	<b>535,443</b>	<b>532,778</b>	
<b>Total Southern</b>	<b>17,130</b>	<b>108,632</b>	<b>116,999</b>	Other Donations	6,271	25,640	25,128
"God loveth a cheerful giver" 2 Corinthians 9:7				<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100,905</b>	<b>561,082</b>	<b>557,906</b>
				Including Gift Aid	34,161	76,144	90,512

## Passionate Love for Christ

*Thomas Vincent (1634-1678)*

Christians ought to love Christ with supreme love. They must place Him in the highest seat of their hearts. He is a great King, and He looks for the throne. All creatures should be placed beneath Him and stand at His footstool. 'He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me' (Mt.10:37). These are the words of our Saviour. Christians may love father and mother, the law of God and nature requires it. They may love husband and wife, the Word of God enjoins

the husband to love his wife as his own body and as Christ loved the Church. They may love sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, kindred, friends, yes enemies, and they ought to do it; yet all must be with a subordinate love. But they must love Christ with their chief love, otherwise they are not worthy to stand in the relation of disciples.

Christians ought to love Christ with ardency of love. 'And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us,

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while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures?’ (Lk.24:32). This burning love Christ kindled in the hearts of His disciples, and this burning love Christ requires of all Christians. ‘Love is strong as death, the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it’ (Song of Sol.8:6-7) Such a strong, vehement, ardent, flaming love, Christians should have unto Jesus Christ, which all the waters of affliction may not be able

to quench, which no floods of temptations or persecutions may be able to drown and overwhelm. Therefore Christians ought to love Christ with constancy of love. Having begun to love Him, they ought to continue to love Him, and to love Him unto the end. As they ought to be constant in their obedience and to persevere in their other graces, so they ought to be constant, and to persevere in this grace of love to Christ.

## One to be Envied and Imitated

*C H Spurgeon*

*‘Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with Him’ (Jn.12:2)*

### Envy Him

He is to be envied. It was well to be Martha and serve, but better to be Lazarus and commune. There are times for each purpose, and each is comely in its season, but none of the trees of the garden yield such clusters as the vine of fellowship. To sit with Jesus, to hear His words, to mark His acts, and receive His smiles, was such a favour as must have made Lazarus as happy as the angels. When it has been our happy lot to feast with our Beloved in His banqueting-hall, we would not have given half a sigh for all the kingdoms of the world, if so much breath could have bought them.

### Imitate Him

He is to be imitated. It would have been a strange thing if Lazarus had not been at the table where Jesus was, for he had been dead, and Jesus had raised him. For the risen one to be absent when the Lord who gave him life was at his house, would have been ungrateful indeed. We too were once dead,

yea, and like Lazarus stinking in the grave of sin; Jesus raised us, and by His life we live – can we be content to live at a distance from Him? Do we omit to remember Him at His table, where He deigns to feast with His brethren? Oh, this is cruel! It behoves us to repent, and do as He has bidden us, for His least wish should be law to us. To have lived without constant intercourse with one of whom the Jews said, ‘Behold how he loved him’, would have been disgraceful to Lazarus; is it excusable in us whom Jesus has loved with an everlasting love? To have been cold to Him who wept over his lifeless corpse, would have argued great brutishness in Lazarus. What does it argue in us over whom the Saviour has not only wept, but bled? Come, brethren, who read this portion, let us return unto our heavenly Bridegroom, and ask for His Spirit that we may be on terms of closer intimacy with Him, and henceforth sit at the table with Him.

## Caring for Street-Children in Zambia

*Don & Christine MacDonald*

### Dear All,

As a family we have enjoyed a more peaceful three months than previously, and we were also able to take a holiday in August and have a trip to Cape Town – my favourite holiday destination. This was made possible by the kindness of Joy Mackenzie and two of our ‘experienced’ volunteers Abby and Becky. Between them they formed a formidable team and planned to let us escape for ten days. We had a wonderful break and rest, and were able to catch up with our good friends the Barrows and the Rasmussens as well as spend time with each other as a family. When we came back we were delighted to hear that the boys had behaved in exemplary fashion and had treated the ‘ladies’ like gentlemen. I was teasing them about it afterwards and they said, ‘It didn’t seem fair to misbehave to Auntie Joy’. So Joy, Abby, Becky, thank you so much and maybe you should teach us whatever you did to produce such a considerate attitude in a bunch of teenage boys.

Shortly after returning to Zambia, I made a trip to Nairobi and was able to take Nicholas and Mulenga. It was their first time to visit, but many of you will know that Christine and I spent three years there between 1992 and 1995 in our first visit to Africa. As well as doing business I was able to fit in a visit to the two Kenyan boys we supported to school many years ago. They are both grown up now, and it was very wonderful to see them again.

### School

On a happier note, Sarah has started Senior Secondary, and she is able to be home every night as it is just across from the Italian school where she went before and where Rachel is. She seems to have enjoyed her first weeks, and is already involved in the Music and Drama activities. The school puts on a production every year in November, and she has already been picked out to perform either on the music side or as an actor. She is talented in these areas, and is blessed to be at a

school where they do so much to encourage the children to make the most of their abilities. Rachel is enjoying being back home with her friends and has started year four. She has developed a mischievous sense of humour and really likes to tease people – as one of the volunteers said, ‘well she IS your daughter Don’. It is so funny seeing yourself in your children – and rather sobering sometimes.

As far as the boys are concerned, Nicholas, Lucky and a number of others have big exams in November; some to get into Junior High School and the older boys to get to Senior High so there is some hard work and desperate studying being done. The stress of this along with the hot weather is fraying tempers, and I feel very sorry for them all. I remember how bad exams used to be even in the temperate climes in Scotland. What it must be like when the thermometer is reading 35 in the shade, I can only imagine. One of our oldest boys, Cleopas, got word today that he passed all his exams for his second semester, meaning that he has successfully negotiated his first year in University. His lowest mark was 78% so I reckon he deserves credit for a very good effort.

### Boys come back

Little John and Jeremiah came back after being away for six months. They tried to come back much earlier but we did not allow them to as we wanted them to learn a lesson. It seemed to be working and they were behaving much better than they did before they went. However a couple of weeks ago, they set off to school, and only John came back. He had some strange story about walking along the road when a car stopped and it just happened to be Jeremiah’s mother, who decided to take him with her. It seems similar to saying, ‘Jeremiah was abducted by aliens’, but at least John came back. He is determined to stick to his story and in fact we knew that Jeremiah’s mother had married someone who did have a car, but did not want Jeremiah, so I guess it is possible. Humphrey and Kenny, the two orphaned lads who joined us just as I wrote my June letter have now settled in and become part of the family, while their sister Sibeso is working hard at boarding school and sits her leaving exams in November in order to join University. Eunice, the desperately poor woman we met recently has been able to go back to her village with her children and we have given her a grant to begin a small business selling fish, so we hope that her problems are being dealt with.

### The Farm

On the farm, the crops are growing well under irrigation, and we have a glut of tomatoes so Christine and her kitchen crew are busy cooking and preserving as many as possible and we sell or give the rest away. The rest of the ground is baked dry and hard and the grass burnt to yellow. We had a scare a couple of days ago when we ran out of water and thought that the bore hole had run dry but mercifully it turned out that the pump had been lowered too far and had stuck in the mud at the bottom, so once that was fixed we had plenty of water. The new dormitory we are building for the boys is making steady

progress but seems to be taking forever to complete. The boys are very excited about their new house and cannot wait to move in, though once we finish the building we will need to furnish it. Bernard is with us again and is getting the house painted and the roof fixed in preparation for the coming rainy season. In fact it seems like we live in a permanent building site as there is always some repair or construction going on. The one thing we never seem to get started on is the much longed-for swimming pool. Especially in the hot season we all long for the chance to cool off, but there are always other priorities much to the boys’ disgust. They would much rather have a pool than worry about things like school fees.

### God’s Encouragement

In the middle of it all, we get strength from the fact that we continue to have the care and support from so many good people all over the world, and that God has never failed us in anything we have tried to do here. We also get encouragement watching the progress made by the young men who have trusted us to care for them. It is by no means a straight line of progress but mostly the movement is in the right direction as they struggle, sometimes against terrible difficulties, to change their behaviour and habits and do something worthwhile with their lives. We continue having to turn boys away – most recently a poor retarded lad called Clifford who seems to have no-one. He asked to come and stay but we have no space nor the resources to deal with his special needs, and so he is left to carry on fending for himself in a world that doesn’t care.

As an illustration of the difference a caring family environment can make to these boys as individuals, I attach a copy of two photos of one of our younger boys, Simba. The photo on the left shows him on the street aged 10/11, while the one on the right shows him now aged 13. If you look at the strain and the evidence of his grim reality on his face before, and the relaxed pose now, you will see why it is worth it to try to help.

For now, all the best from us all

Love

**Don, Christine and all the Kids**



**The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth  
more and more unto the perfect day.  
The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at  
what they stumble.  
Proverbs 4:18-19**